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EDITORIAL.

HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS.—II.

WE called brief attention in our last issue to the great importance of the principle that the nursing qualifications of candidates for the post of Matron to any Hospital should be examined by professional people—in other words, by the members of the Medical Staff of the Institution. Inquiries on the matter have shown that it is very generally the custom for Committees of Management to select ladies to fill these posts with little or no advice on the subject from their Physicians and Surgeons. Twenty, even ten, years ago, this was not of so much importance, because the Matron then frequently was a lady of considerable accomplishments but entirely ignorant of nursing matters.

It will probably be within the memory of many of our readers that, for example, ten years ago the Matrons who most excellently presided over the female staffs of at least eight of the largest Hospitals in the Kingdom were in each instance entirely devoid of the most elementary nursing knowledge. Her duties in the Wards began, and ended, with a formal walk through them at irregular intervals, accompanied by her pet cat or dog. She selected her Sisters, and engaged her Nurses, and, as a matter of course, then devo-

luted to them the entire charge and responsibility of the care of the patients and the control of the Wards. It was the domestic management of the Institution which occupied her chief thought and attention, because it was for this, and the resulting expenditure, that she was held responsible by the Committee. Of course those days have passed away, never to return; and now we find that on the rare occasions when an untrained gentlewoman is appointed to the Matronship of a Hospital because of her particular fitness for the post for some special local reason, she hastens to acquire the nursing knowledge necessary for her position. But apparently lay Committees have not yet recognised the altered condition of affairs, and we maintain that the very fact that they have not done so is an incontestable proof that they are not in touch with the progress of Nursing, nor alive to its present great importance in the treatment of disease.

And incidentally this would show the essential absurdity of the protest against Registration, which, as everyone has noticed, was chiefly signed by these gentlemen; and indeed it would explain the mystery of their signatures to that exploded document.

It cannot therefore be too often or too strongly insisted on that the main duty and function of a Matron now is to take, not only a direct part in the supervision of the entire Nursing department of her Hospital, but also the chief share in the education of her Probationers. Domestic details can be carried out by an untrained person; but the Matron must be a Trained Nurse if she is to perform her duty efficiently as the head of the Nursing Staff. From this it clearly follows that in the selection of a Matron attention should be paid above all to her professional and personal qualifications for the post. And if this be granted, then it is evident that the contention with which we commenced—that the Matron should be selected by the members of the medical staff, with whom she will have most directly to work—is

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